

# Fossils

**Intro Activity:** Put a fossil in a cloth bag and tie it closed. Have the students pass the bag around and feel what's inside. Instruct them write down their observations and predict what is.

This page has a handout explaining how fossils are formed and a crossword puzzle to go with it. [http://www.science-teachers.com/fossil\\_worksheets.htm](http://www.science-teachers.com/fossil_worksheets.htm)

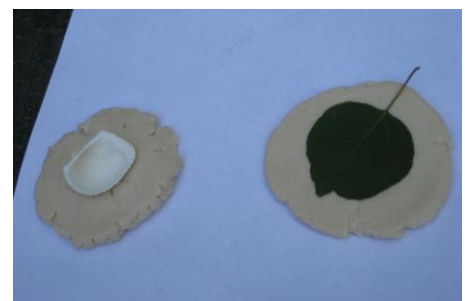
## Make your own fossil

- Plaster of Paris
- Clay/play dough
- Rolling pin
- Petroleum jelly
- An inexpensive fossil if you have one or a fossil substitute (shrimp shell, snail shell)
- Water
- Paper strips – cut printer paper length wise down the middle, and then fold each half down the middle length wise.
- stapler

1. Show the students some fossils. Discuss casts and molds. Have the students relate these fossils to something they know like a bunt cake, candy molds, etc.
2. We know about ancient animals because of fossilization. Sea animals that died left behind their shells and skeletons. How did they become fossils? Talk about how their skeletons fell to the bottom of the ocean, were buried, and filled with sand and other sediment.
3. Use a piece of paper as a work surface. Have the students roll a ball of clay flat into about a 1" thick circle.



4. Press a shell or other fossil into the clay. Press it down enough to make a clear impression, but not all the way through the clay.



5. Remove the shell (because many organisms decay and are replaced entirely by minerals). Rub petroleum jelly over the mold, this way it will be easier to separate it from the plaster.
6. Make a ring out of a strip of paper, staple it closed, and place it over your clay.



7. Mix the Plaster of Paris with water and pour it into the mold.



8. Let the plaster dry for 30 min. Then remove it.



9. Remind the students that fossilization takes a long time. It may take thousands or millions of years to form. Minerals in the water seep into the soil and rock. The minerals slowly replace the shell or bone of the ancient organisms. A rock is left that looks like the shell or bone that was once there.